

Winter tips for livestock and pets

Livestock

This particular time of year we come into many problems with livestock. As the weather gets colder, the pasture vegetation dries up and what is left is only filler.

Livestock burn a lot of energy just to keep warm in the winter months. The feeding program you used in the spring and summer is not sufficient to maintain an animal in the cold winter months.

Every animal is an individual and what is right for one may not be right for another. How an animal is used is another big factor in how it should be fed. A horse that is ridden extensively uses a lot more energy than a horse that is ridden once a month. When you combine the cold and the work, you are doubling the amount of energy and calories used, so you need to compensate for that.

If you are feeding several horses and/or cattle together, pay close attention to how they get along. One or two of the animals may dominate and push the others away so they will not get their quota of feed.

It is also very important that livestock have clean, potable water available at all times. It's just as critical in the wintertime as it is in the summer. Water helps to regulate an animal's body temperature.

A good worming and vaccination program is also very important. When animals are properly wormed and vaccinated they are not as susceptible to nutrition problems.

Livestock require a place to be able to get out of the wet and cold. Shelter has to be available whether the animal chooses to use it or not.

Dogs and cats

A car may not be a safe place in the cold. Pets should not be left alone in a vehicle for extended periods of time. A car may actually hold the cold air inside freezing your pet.

Antifreeze can have a sweet taste and be attractive to dogs and cats. Unfortunately it is poisonous to pets even in very small doses. Carefully clean up any spilled antifreeze on your property and make sure your pets are not straying from your premises.

The warmth of a recently shut down car engine can be attractive to cats in the cold weather. Cats often crawl under the car hood to utilize the engine warmth. They may be severely injured or killed when the engine is restarted. A quick bang on the hood may frighten off a snoozing cat before an unfortunate accident occurs.

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